

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method where an indication of **total** length of **consumed** stock material **over the production of multiple cushioning products** (or "pads") is monitored and stored by a memory for subsequent retrieval (emphasis added).

Similarly, independent claim 20 is directed to a method where an indication of total cumulative length of the cushioning products produced during a time period is monitored and stored. Independent claim 21 is directed to similar features.

Such an invention is not taught or reasonably suggested by the prior art. More specifically, Ratzel teaches determining the cushioning product needs of a certain container and then controlling a conversion machine to make an appropriate set of pads. The length of each produced pad is individually monitored to determine when to stop the conversion process and cut the pad from the web of material.

At best, Ratzel teaches storing or retrieving desired pad length information for a particular container, but in no way teaches or suggests storing the amount of consumed stock material and/or the length of one or more pads after each pad has been produced and the conversion machine commences the generation of another pad.

The present invention results in a number of advantages that are not possible to achieve with the teachings of Ratzel. For example, stock consumption and/or pad length generation can be monitored over one or more worker shifts to track worker productivity.

As another example, stock inventory can be efficiently evaluated so that additional stock can be reordered in a timely manner while the need to physically count the amount of stock on hand is minimized. In addition, the rate at which stock is consumed can be determined, which further assists in determining when stock re-ordering may be needed. The ability to track stock in this manner assists in avoiding an emergency situation where the special delivery of stock would be needed due to the unexpected depletion of stock.

As yet another example, a supplier of paper may wish to know whether his customer has obtained stock from an alternative supplier, potentially in breach of a contract. The ability to read a cumulative indication of stock usage over a specified period of time can be a key indicator in this regard.

The prior art does not allow for any of the foregoing exemplary advantages to be realized.

In view of the above, independent claims 6, 20 and 21 are considered to be allowable. In addition, claims 2-19 depend from claim 6 and are also considered to be allowable for at least the same reasons. In addition, the dependent claims define novel and unobvious features of the present invention, each of which deserves independent examination and consideration by the Examiner.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is requested.

*Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)*

Claims 12 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Ratzel in further view of Official Notice. Claims 12 and 14 depend from claim 1 and are considered to be allowable for at least the reasons identified above.

Furthermore, at the time the invention was made, it is believed that the claimed invention would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the cushioning conversion arts. If the Examiner maintains the present rejection, references teaching each and every aspect of the claimed invention (including those aspects falling within the Official Notice) along with a clearly established motivation to combine the references or modify them to arrive at the present invention is requested.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is requested.

*Added Claims*

Claims 22-32 have been added. Claims 22-32 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above.

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*Conclusion*

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned representative to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 18-0988, our Order No. RANPP0170USA.

Respectfully submitted,

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